



### PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE, AUSTRALIA, (including persons who wanted to work but were not defined as unemployed) MARCH 1984 (PRELIMINARY)

**PHONE INQUIRIES** *for more information about these statistics*—contact Ms Pam Hahne on Canberra (062) 52 6503 or any of our State offices.  
*other inquiries including copies of publications*—contact Information Services on Canberra (062) 52 6627 or in any of our State offices.

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#### MAIN FEATURES

##### Notes

(i) *New or amended concepts and definitions were introduced in the September 1983 survey, causing a break in series. Refer to Explanatory notes for more detail.*

(ii) *Survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraph 29 below.*

**In March 1984, 4,513,200 persons aged 15 years and over were not in the labour force. Of these 750,000 had marginal attachment to the labour force, little change from the September 1983 figure of 765,600.**

**Among those with marginal attachment to the labour force**

**743,000 wanted to work and were available to start within 4 weeks (733,700 in September 1983). 116,100 of these were discouraged jobseekers.**

**7,000 were actively looking for work but were not available to start within 4 weeks, a substantial decrease from the September 1983 estimate, 31,900.**

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

##### Introduction

Since 1975, the ABS has conducted regular surveys of persons not in the labour force, seeking information on their labour force aspirations and, if appropriate, their availability for work and reasons for not currently looking for work. As interest has grown over the years in this component of the population, various modifications have been made to the survey to provide a more comprehensive range of data. The September 1983 survey was further modified by the introduction of a new concept, '*marginal attachment to the labour force*' (see paragraphs 4 and 12) and some improvements were made to the measure of discouraged jobseekers. These changes caused break in series (see paragraphs 21 to 28).

2. Persons not in the labour force are by definition those persons who do not meet the criteria that would enable them to be classified as being in the labour force. To be classified as being in the labour force, a person must be aged 15 years or over and be either employed or unemployed. Definitions of *employed* and *unemployed* are given in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

3. *Persons not in the labour force*, therefore, include all persons aged 15 years and over who are not employed, who want work but do not meet the criteria to be classified as unemployed; who do not want to work; or who through incapacity or infirmity can not work.

4. The revised survey now provides more detailed characteristics concerning those persons who do not meet all of the criteria to be classified as unemployed but who have marginal attachment to the labour force. For the purposes of this survey, marginal attachment includes persons who were not actively looking for work but who wanted to work and were available to start work within four weeks and persons who were actively looking for work but were not available for work in the week prior to interview (the survey week).

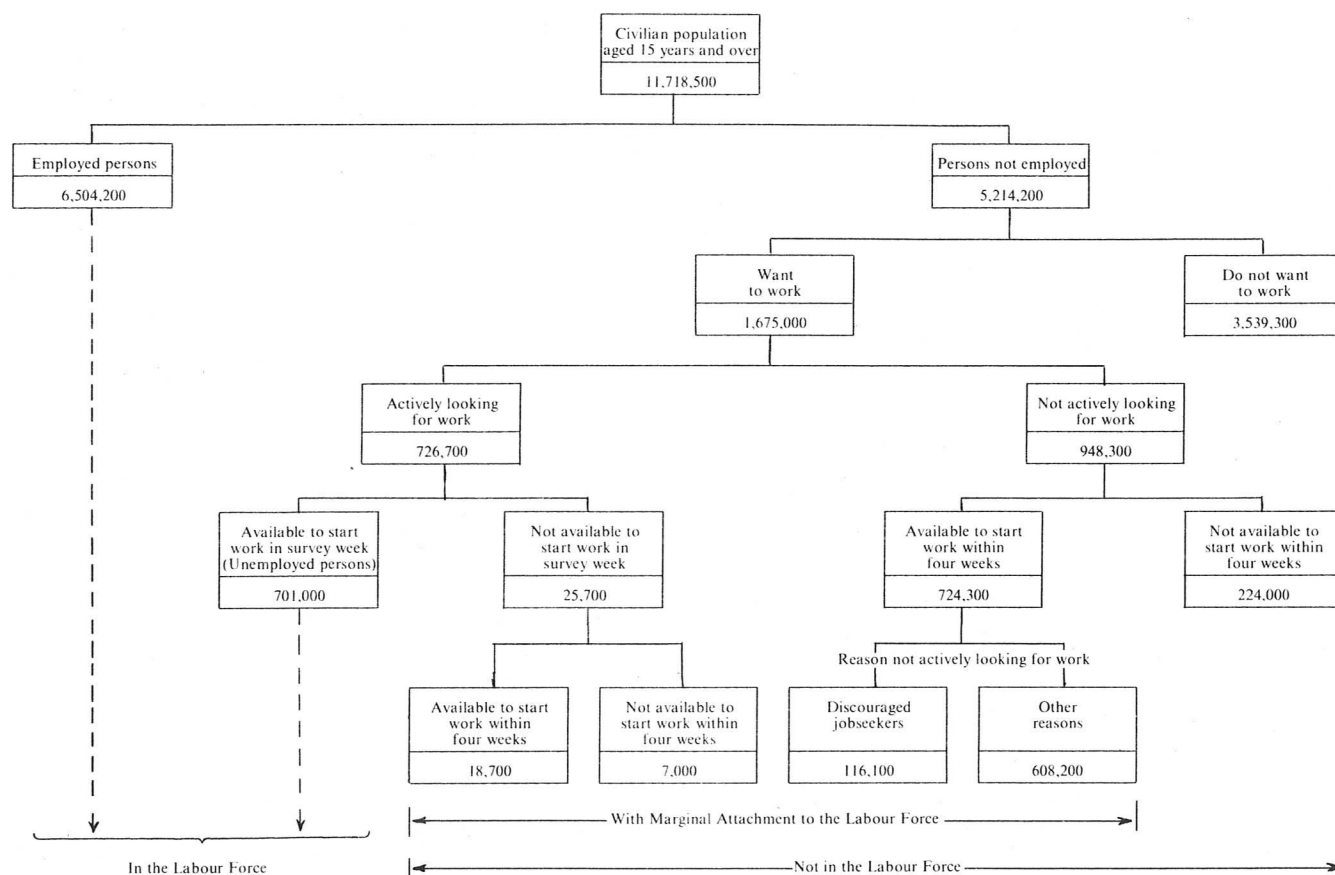
5. The criteria determining those in the labour force are based on actual activity (i.e. working or looking for work) during the survey week. The criteria associated with marginal attachment to the labour force, in particular the concepts of wanting to work, availability to start work and reasons for not actively looking, are more subjective and are not based on respondents' actual activity. Hence, the measurement of these criteria is affected by the respondents' own interpretation of the concepts used. Individual respondent's interpretation is affected by such factors as the respondent's work aspirations as well as their family, economic and other commitments.

6. *Discouraged jobseekers* (a subcategory of those with marginal attachment are those persons who were available to start work within four weeks but who were not actively looking for work for reasons which are assessed to indicate discouragement. (Refer to paragraph 16 for a fuller definition).

7. The survey also provides details of those persons who stated that they want to work, but who are not defined as having marginal attachment to the labour force.

8. The various groups of persons either in the labour force or not in the labour force, including those marginally attached to the labour force, are shown schematically in the following diagram.

# RELATIONSHIP OF PERSONS WITH MARGINAL ATTACHMENT TO THE LABOUR FORCE TO PERSONS IN OR NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE



9. This survey was run in conjunction with the March 1984 labour force survey conducted throughout Australia. During the two weeks beginning Monday 12 March 1984 specially trained interviewers asked questions of those of the 72,000 respondents in the March labour force survey who fell within the scope of this survey.

10. This publication contains only a summary of the results of the survey. Estimates shown are preliminary and may be revised. Further information which will be published as soon as possible is available on request.

## Scope

11. The survey includes all persons not in the labour force aged fifteen years and over except:

- (a) certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from census and estimated populations;
- (b) overseas residents in Australia;

- (c) dependants of non-Australian defence forces personnel stationed in Australia.

## Definitions

12. *Persons with marginal attachment to the labour force* are those who are not in the labour force in survey week and:

- (a) *wanted to work and were available to start within four weeks; or*
- (b) *were actively looking for work but were not available to start work within four weeks.*

13. *Persons who wanted to work and were available to start within four weeks* are those who:

- (a) *in the four weeks up to the end of the survey week had taken active steps to find work and who were available to start work within four weeks, even though they were unable to start in survey week for reasons other than own temporary illness or injury; or*

(b) were available to start work within four weeks and:

- (i) although claiming to have looked for work in the four weeks up to the end of the survey week, had not taken *active steps* to find work; or
- (ii) in the four weeks up to the end of the survey week had not looked for work but in the survey answered 'yes' or 'maybe' to the question '*Even though you have not been looking for work would you like a full-time or part-time job?*'.

14. *Persons who were actively looking for work but were not available to start work within four weeks* are those who in the four weeks up to the end of survey week had taken active steps to find work but were not available to start work in survey week for reasons other than own temporary illness or injury or within the four weeks following the interview.

15. *Active steps to find work* include writing, telephoning or applying in person to an employer for work; answering a newspaper advertisement for a job; checking factory or Commonwealth Employment Service noticeboards; being registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service; checking or registering with any other employment agency; advertising or tendering for work; and contacting friends or relatives.

16. *Discouraged jobseekers* are those persons with marginal attachment to the labour force who wanted to work and were available to start work within four weeks but whose main reason for not taking active steps to find work was that they believed they would not be able to find a job for any of the following reasons; considered by employers to be too young or too old; language or racial difficulties; lack the necessary training, skills or experience; no jobs in their locality or line of work or no jobs at all available.

17. Persons are classified as *married* if they are reported as being married (including de facto) and their spouse was a usual resident of the household at the time of the survey. The *not-married* category includes persons who have never married, or are separated, widowed or divorced; as well as those who, although reported as being married, did not have a spouse who usually lived in the household. For effects on estimates of marital status, see paragraph 28.

18. Further definitions of labour force and demographic categories appearing in this publication are given in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

### Population Benchmarks

19. Following the change in official population estimates to a place of usual residence basis after the 1981 Census the population benchmarks used in this survey are compiled according to place of usual residence. For an explanation of the new conceptual basis of population estimates see *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

20. The change from 1976 population Census based benchmarks to 1981 population Census based benchmarks has had little effect on the movements in the estimates between the September 1983 and March 1984 surveys.

### Discontinuities in the series

21. The modifications made to the September 1983 survey included the addition of certain groups of persons excluded from previous 'Persons Not in the Labour Force' surveys and several alterations to the order and wording of questions used in the survey.

22. Only those respondents who reported that they were available to start work within the next four weeks were asked their reasons for not actively looking for work. Hence persons classified as discouraged jobseekers in this survey must have been available to start work within four weeks. This availability criterion was not applied to the definition of discouraged jobseekers in surveys prior to September 1983. The application of the criterion removes the previous anomaly that persons were classified as discouraged jobseekers regardless of whether or not they were available to start work in the near future.

23. Persons not in the labour force aged 65 years and over were added to the survey in September 1983 and may be classified as being discouraged jobseekers or as otherwise having marginal attachment to the labour force.

24. Persons belonging to two other groups were added to the survey in September 1983:

- (a) persons who were actively looking for work but who were unable to start in survey week for reasons other than their own temporary illness or injury. These persons are classified as having marginal attachment to the labour force, but not as discouraged jobseekers; and
- (b) persons who had been away from work without pay for four weeks or longer and had not been actively looking for work. Of these persons, those that wanted to work and were available to start work within four weeks are classified as having marginal attachment to the labour force, but not as discouraged jobseekers.

25. Respondents not in the labour force who wanted to work and were available to start within four weeks were asked their *main* reasons for not actively looking for work to determine, among other things, whether the respondents should be classified as discouraged jobseekers. In surveys prior to September 1983, the *main* reason was not asked and respondents were classified as discouraged jobseekers or otherwise according to the 'highest ranked reason' given for not actively looking for work.



26. An extra reason for not actively looking for work ('no jobs at all') was added to the discouraged jobseeker list.

27. A change was made to the ordering of the questions. The responses to some questions may differ from responses in previous surveys because of this change to question order and the subjective nature of some of the questions.

28. Paragraph 17 outlines the definition of marital status now used in this survey. Consequently, estimates of marital status contained in this publication are not comparable with estimates published for this survey in previous years, which classified as married all respondents who reported that they were married or separated.

### Reliability of the estimates

29. Estimates in this publication are subject to two sources of error:

- (a) *sampling error*: since the estimates are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*. More information about this topic is contained in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0). A table of estimated standard errors for this survey follows these notes. Estimates with a standard error of more than about 27 per cent have not been shown in this publication, as the degree of sampling variability would seriously detract from their value for most reasonable uses. Although figures for these small components can, in some cases, be derived by subtraction they should not be regarded as reliable.

- (b) *non-sampling error*: inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in reporting by interviewers and respondents and errors made in the coding and processing of data. These inaccuracies may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or only a sample. Every effort is made to reduce the non-sampling error to a minimum by careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers and efficient operating procedures.

### Related publications

30. Other ABS publications which may be of interest include:

*The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0)—issued monthly  
*Labour Force Experience, Australia, during the year ending February 1983* (6206.0)

*Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 1983* (6220.0)

*Persons Looking for Work, Australia, July 1983* (6222.0)

31. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

### Symbols and other usages

- \* subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses. See paragraph 29 above.  
 . . not applicable.

32. Because figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

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**Australian Statistician**

### STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

Size of estimate (Persons)	Approximate standard error of estimate		Size of estimate (Persons)	Approximate standard error of estimate	
	Persons	Per cent of estimate		Persons	Per cent of estimate
3,000	800	26.7	50,000	2,900	5.8
4,000	900	22.5	100,000	3,900	3.9
5,000	1,000	20.0	200,000	5,100	2.6
10,000	1,400	14.0	300,000	6,000	2.0
20,000	2,000	10.0	500,000	7,200	1.4
			1,000,000	9,100	0.9

**TABLE 1. CIVILIAN POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER : EMPLOYMENT STATUS,  
MARCH 1984  
( ' 000)**

	September 1983			March 1984		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
Civilian population aged 15 years and over	5,725.7	5,859.9	11,585.5	5,768.4	5,950.1	11,718.5
Employed	3,979.6	2,370.3	6,350.0	4,052.3	2,451.9	6,504.2
Unemployed	435.3	283.4	718.7	404.7	296.3	701.0
Persons not in the labour force	1,310.7	3,206.1	4,516.8	1,311.3	3,201.9	4,513.2
With marginal attachment to the labour force	162.8	602.8	765.6	154.2	595.8	750.0
Wanted to work and available to start work within four weeks	142.0	591.7	733.7	150.9	592.1	743.0
Were actively looking for work	7.4	14.4	21.9	9.3	9.4	18.7
Were not actively looking for work	134.6	577.3	711.8	141.6	582.7	724.3
Discouraged jobseekers	26.4	91.8	118.2	24.8	91.3	116.1
Not actively looking for other reasons	108.2	485.4	593.6	116.8	491.4	608.2
Were actively looking for work but not available to start work within four weeks	20.8	11.1	31.9	3.3	3.7	7.0
Without marginal attachment to the labour force	1,147.9	2,603.3	3,751.2	1,157.2	2,606.1	3,763.3
Wanted to work but not actively looking for work and not available to start work within four weeks	64.8	179.4	244.2	48.6	175.3	224.0
Did not want to work	958.4	2,267.0	3,225.4	987.0	2,288.1	3,275.2
Permanently unable to work	44.9	32.4	77.3	31.9	20.3	52.3
In institutions (a)	79.8	124.5	204.3	89.5	122.3	211.8

(a) Includes students boarding at school, some patients in hospitals and sanatoria and inmates of reformatories, jails etc.

### PERSONS WITH MARGINAL ATTACHMENT TO THE LABOUR FORCE

**TABLE 2. PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WITH MARGINAL  
ATTACHMENT TO THE LABOUR FORCE : REASON FOR NOT ACTIVELY LOOKING  
FOR WORK AND INTENTION TO LOOK FOR WORK (a), MARCH 1984  
( ' 000)**

Main reason for not actively looking for work	Intention to look for work					Total		
	Intending to look	Might look	Would not look	Does not know	Not asked(b)	Males	Females	Persons
Wanted to work and available to start work within four weeks								
Had a job to go to	...	...	...	...	10.3	3.4	6.9	10.3
Personal reasons	131.3	42.8	82.6	8.7	..	98.4	167.1	265.5
Own ill health, disability, pregnancy	28.9	11.4	17.8	4.1	..	25.1	37.0	62.2
Attending an educational institution	71.9	13.5	17.5	*	..	52.7	52.1	104.8
Has no need to work	11.4	10.1	27.6	*	..	9.3	40.2	49.5
Give others a chance	3.2		7.4	*	..	*	9.9	11.0
Welfare payments/pension may be affected	4.7	4.0	11.4	*	..	6.1	15.6	21.7
Moved house/holidays	13.3	*	*	*	..	4.1	12.2	16.3
Family reasons	81.4	50.5	117.0	13.6	..	3.1	259.4	262.5
Ill health of other than self	4.1	*	3.2	*	..	*	9.6	10.1
Unable to find suitable child care/ preferred to look after children	61.2	39.1	100.7	11.0	..	*	210.9	212.1
Other family considerations	16.1	9.1	13.1	*	..	*	38.9	40.3
Discouraged jobseekers	58.1	22.1	30.3	5.6	..	24.8	91.3	116.1
Considered too young or too old by employers	10.8	5.5	16.5	*	..	12.0	22.6	34.5
Language or racial difficulties	3.5		*	*	..	*	3.5	3.8
Lacks schooling, training, skills or experience	5.1	*	3.0	*	..	*	8.4	10.0
No jobs in locality or line of work	24.1	9.3	5.7	*	..	6.5	34.1	40.7
No jobs at all	15.2	4.9	6.5	*	..	4.3	22.8	27.1
No jobs in suitable hours	11.6	6.8	4.1	*	..	*	20.8	22.9
Other reasons	15.4	4.7	6.9	*	..	6.1	22.0	28.2
Don't know	3.4	*	3.9	*	..	*	7.9	9.5
Were actively looking for work	..	..	..	..	18.7	9.3	9.4	18.7
Not asked(c)	..	..	..	..	9.3	*	7.3	9.3
Were actively looking for work but not available to start work within four weeks	..	..	..	..	7.0	3.3	3.7	7.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>301.3</b>	<b>129.1</b>	<b>243.4</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>154.2</b>	<b>595.8</b>	<b>750.0</b>

(a) In the next twelve months. (b) Comprises persons who had a job to go to, persons who took active steps to find work and persons as defined in footnote (c) below.  
(c) Persons who had a job but, up to the end of survey week, had been away from work without pay for four weeks or longer and had not been actively looking for work.

TABLE 3. PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WITH MARGINAL ATTACHMENT TO THE LABOUR FORCE :  
SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS, MARCH 1984  
( ' 000)

	<i>Discouraged jobseekers</i>			<i>All persons with marginal attachment to the labour force</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>91.3</b>	<b>116.1</b>	<b>154.2</b>	<b>595.8</b>	<b>750.0</b>
Marital status—						
Married	13.4	68.7	82.2	56.9	442.7	499.6
Not married	11.4	22.5	33.9	97.2	153.1	250.3
Age group (years)—						
15-19	5.2	4.8	10.0	58.5	64.7	123.2
20-24	*	4.8	6.7	16.9	63.5	80.3
25-34	*	18.7	19.3	13.4	203.9	217.3
35-44	*	20.5	21.2	9.4	138.2	147.6
45-54	*	25.0	27.2	13.7	73.9	87.5
55-64	7.5	11.8	19.4	25.0	40.4	65.4
65 and over	6.6	5.6	12.3	17.2	11.3	28.6
Work preference—						
Full-time	12.9	17.1	30.0	72.9	91.3	164.1
Part-time	10.6	68.5	79.1	74.7	486.5	561.2
No preference	*	5.7	7.0	6.6	18.0	24.6
Whether looked for work in the last 12 months—						
Had not looked for work	12.5	60.0	72.5	95.6	460.5	556.1
Had looked for work	12.3	31.3	43.6	58.6	135.3	193.8
Less than 5 weeks ago	4.5	8.7	13.2	26.8	48.7	75.4
5 and less than 8 weeks ago	*	9.6	11.3	12.0	36.6	48.6
8 and less than 13 weeks ago	*	5.6	8.5	10.0	22.1	32.1
13 and less than 52 weeks ago	3.3	7.4	10.7	9.8	27.9	37.7
Work experience—						
Never had a job(a)	3.6	7.5	11.1	44.3	65.0	109.3
Had a job(a)	21.2	83.8	105.0	109.9	530.8	640.7
Worked in the last year	5.7	11.8	17.6	48.9	105.9	154.7
Within the last 6 months	3.1	6.4	9.6	35.1	67.8	102.9
6 to 12 months ago	*	5.4	8.0	13.7	38.1	51.8
Worked 1 to 3 years ago	7.9	19.4	27.3	31.5	117.2	148.7
Worked 3 to 10 years ago	6.6	28.9	35.5	27.2	197.0	224.2
Worked more than 10 years ago	*	23.7	24.7	*	110.8	113.0
Reason for leaving last job(a)—						
Dismissed, retrenched	7.4	17.2	24.6	22.2	61.8	84.0
Seasonal/temporary, went back to school	3.6	9.9	13.4	27.3	64.3	91.6
Retired, did not want to work any longer	5.2	7.5	12.7	18.1	27.5	45.6
Own ill health or injury	*	5.2	6.7	21.9	28.4	50.3
Family considerations	*	24.6	24.7	*	238.9	240.8
Left to get married	*	8.4	8.4	*	47.4	47.4
Left to have children	..	11.4	11.4	..	153.4	153.4
Other family considerations	*	4.7	4.8	*	38.1	40.1
Travel, moved house, spouse transferred	*	12.4	13.3	4.9	62.1	67.1
Unsatisfactory work arrangements	*	4.2	5.7	5.5	24.8	30.3
Other reasons	*	*	3.8	6.0	15.7	21.7
Not asked(b)	*	*	*	*	7.3	9.3
Never had a job(a)	3.6	7.5	11.1	44.3	65.0	109.3

(a) Paid employment, full-time or part-time, for two weeks or more in any job or business. (b) Persons who had a job but, up to the end of survey week, had been away from work without pay for four weeks or longer and who wanted to work, were available to start work within four weeks and had not been actively looking for work.

# PERSONS WITHOUT MARGINAL ATTACHMENT TO THE LABOUR FORCE

**TABLE 4. PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WHO WANTED TO WORK BUT WERE NOT ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR WORK AND WERE NOT AVAILABLE TO START WORK WITHIN FOUR WEEKS : REASON NOT AVAILABLE TO START AND INTENTION TO LOOK FOR WORK(a), MARCH 1984**  
( ' 000)

<i>Reason not available to start within four weeks</i>	<i>Intention to look for work</i>					<i>Total</i>		
	<i>Intending to look</i>	<i>Might look</i>	<i>Would not look</i>	<i>Does not know</i>	<i>Not asked(b)</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
Personal reasons	41.0	21.7	45.9	4.4	7.0	45.5	74.5	120.0
Own ill health etc.	18.0	15.2	31.7	3.1	6.8	29.8	45.1	74.8
Studying	17.9	4.3	11.8	*	*	14.7	20.1	34.8
At school	15.9	4.1	11.2	*	*	13.5	18.4	31.9
Other educational institution	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Moved house/holidays	5.0	*	*	*	*	*	9.4	10.4
Family reasons	14.4	13.0	47.5	4.1	7.4	*	84.8	86.4
Ill health of other than self	*	*	5.5	*	*	*	8.1	9.0
No suitable child care	3.6	*	7.6	*	*	*	15.4	15.9
Children too young etc.	9.6	8.5	34.3	*	6.8	*	61.4	61.5
Other reasons	*	*	9.7	*	*	*	16.0	17.6
<b>Total</b>								
<b>Males</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>48.6</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Females</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>28.8</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>175.3</b>	<b>..</b>
<b>Persons</b>	<b>58.2</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>103.1</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>224.0</b>

(a) In the next twelve months. (b) Persons who had a job but, up to the end of survey week, had been away from work without pay for four weeks or longer and had not been actively looking for work.

